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ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
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# Application form of a concept note

## Call 1

### Territorial Strategy

## INTERREG VI-A IPA Bulgaria Türkiye Programme

**2021-2027**

*This dully filled in form must be annexed to the application form in Jems (<https://jems-bgtr.mrrb.bg/>) where applicants first need to register and then create own application from of the project idea/concept note. Please, follow the instructions how to do that, which are included in application package of the present Call 1.*

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE CONCEPT NOTES IN JEMS**  
**24 July 2023, 17:00 EEST**



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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

## A.1 Project identification

Project ID: **BGTR0200032**

Name of the lead partner organization

(original language and English language): **Община Стамболово Municipality of Stambolovo**

Project title: **Supporting sustainable tourism and boosting local environmental and economic development in Stambolovo municipality and Luleburgaz district**

Project acronym: **Touraccess**

## B – Project partners

Enter Project Partners:

Reconstruction and Development Union -Съюз за възстановяване и развитие, Luleburgaz district - Lüleburgaz Kaymaklığı and Ahmetbey Belediyesi - Municipality of Ahmetbey

## C - Project description

### C.1 Project overall objective

*The Programme priority specific objective your project will contribute to (automatically generated in section A.1. of the application form in JeMS,):*

**SO5.2. Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security, in areas other than urban areas**

*The Territorial Strategy's objective your project will contribute to:*

**Strategic objective 1 “Achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth based on increased competitiveness of the local economy, digital and green transformation”**

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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

Now think about your main objective – what do you aim to achieve by the end of your project? Remember your project needs to contribute to the programme's and the territorial strategy objective

1.2. Your objective should:

- be realistic and achievable by the end of the project, or shortly after;
- specify who needs project results and in which territory;
- be measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for

Our objective is to contribute to sustainable economic growth in the Municipality of Stambolovo and Luleburgaz district through supporting tourism and local initiatives thus increasing competitiveness of the local economy, digital and green transformation. The project will make the area more popular and attractive for tourist through building eco-trails cycling lane, interactive exhibition , improving access to historical site, digitalization of tourist information, promotion and education.



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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

## C.2 Project relevance and context

### C.2.1. What are the common territorial challenge(s) that will be tackled by the project?

Please describe why your project is needed in the programme area and the relevance of your project for the programme area, in terms of common challenges and opportunities addressed. It is very important to think of that challenges as a potential and not obstacle to the development of the cross-border region. The ultimate objective of your project idea should not be the overcoming of impediments, but the need to strengthen and expand something (practice, model, solution) that have a potential for territorial cohesion of the border region.

The cross-border area is a territory with great potential for tourism development based on natural and historical features. The municipality of Stambolovo is a typical rural municipality with a predominant agricultural sector, with rich natural resources and biodiversity. On its territory, the municipality has 3 national protected areas and 3 Natura 2000 sites. The municipal forest area amounts to 9,088 ha or 80% of the total forest area. Here in the Eastern Rhodopes is one of the most biologically rich area in Bulgaria and Europe according to the National Biodiversity strategy, especially for birds. Species attractive for tourists such as the Griffon vulture, the Egyptian vulture and Black stork occur in the area. Similarly Luleburgas district harbours rare and attractive species such as Imperial eagle and Long-legged buzzard. Interest in practicing alternative forms of tourism is increasing, which is favoured by relatively low urbanization, poorly developed infrastructure and population decline.

On-going migration processes, depopulation and unemployment in the CBC area are being observed in recent years. However this creates huge opportunity for rewilding – bringing nature back that is new trend in Europe attracting visitors to such areas. Eastern Rhodopes were selected by Rewilding Europe as one of the 10 pilot European sites. The project has taken into account and will address the existing environmental and tourism realities in the cross-border region, which has a low degree of utilisation of the rich biodiversity, and opportunity for development of viable joint cross-border green tourism products.

The project is designed to make substantial contribution and will address the following needs and issues of the target area:

- Integrated and coordinated territorial accroaches, as well as more and better measures, including a high degree of information sharing will be undertaken;
- Low accessibility of natural sites and landmarks from the main local roads would be improved;
- Low level of environmental awareness will be addressed through promotional and educational activities.

The project plans, with the help of various investments, which are combined with innovative soft measures, to achieve exactly this - introduction of new technologies and digitization of tourist routes, construction of infrastructure - 2 eco-trails leading to natural and historical site (Thracian stone tomb)

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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

a bicycle lane , an interactive exhibition located in a visitor centre and dedicated to biodiversity, two community centers combined with educational and communication activities that increase engagement.

Each partner in the project, based on the available local resources and expert capacity, has its own tasks and commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the project activities to the maximum extent.

*C.2.2. How does the project tackle identified common challenges and/or opportunities and what is new about the approach the project takes?*

Please describe new solutions that will be developed during the project and/or existing solutions that will be adopted and implemented during the project lifetime. Describe also in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/programme area/participating countries. Definition of a solution in the context of integrated territorial development is provided in **Annex 4 Indicators fiches** under the description of output indicator **RCO116 Jointly developed solutions** and result indicator **RCR104 Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organizations**

The project development process followed a bottom-up approach. In order to achieve complete synchronization in the development of the project solutions, each partner conducted a survey of the interested parties about the problems that are registered in the cross-border territory. On this basis, two partner meetings were held to identify joint solutions to improve the environment. The territorial tool was used: working group, consultations, and gathering ideas for project activities.

The project will apply a pilot model to increase attractiveness of the region using combination of digital technology, improved infrastructure (eco-trails cycling lane, interactive exhibition) and soft measures (photographic plener, youth events and meetings). Cross-border network will be created in order to ensure continuation of the joint work. New partnerships on both sides of the border will further develop them and create prerequisites for the exchange of resources, knowledge and expertise. The cross-border network will expand, deepen and continue them. The project actions are based on the needs of local stakeholders. Community centers will serve to the local people and the attractions will help local tourist business to have more customers that stay longer in the area.

The jointly developed solution will have sufficient documentary evidence comprising of:

- (1) a plan to address the objective to boost the tourism linked with identified common territorial challenges;
- (2) drafting and design process – common meeting and conferences followed by implementation
- (3) indications of the actions – number of tourist attractions and innovative events – photo planers, interactive exposition, eco-trails, cycling lane;



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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

The solutions within the projects will tackle issues of increasing the tourism attractiveness of the CBC region based on the related potentials, by means of:

- Access and exposition of cultural heritage (Thracian tomb) and natural sites (rock complex in protected site), avoiding however heritage and tourism commodification by carefully selecting the routes;
- strengthening the links between natural and cultural sites connecting Thracian tomb and nature site by including them in eco-trails and mobility network including using digital methods;
- developing tourism products and services based on needs and trends – stressing on current demand for access to rewilding sites and Thracian rock monuments;
- training of tourism staff will be carried out;
- improving CBC tourism marketing and branding practices by intensive advertisement and promotional campaign.

Jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organizations from each of the two partner countries in the drafting and design process of the solution

The benefits of implementing the green economy and partnerships will be promoted through a variety of advertising and training activities. In this way, the benefits of the green economy will spread to, entrepreneurs in the territory, students and pupils.

*C.2.2.1. What kind of main activities will be carried out to produce the project solutions and achieve the desired results?*

Please, describe the main activities of the project idea and explain why they are needed to reach project results. You may support your presentation by shortly describing the intervention logic of your project idea – that is the logical linkages between the project objectives, the main project activities, the solution/s the activities bring in and their ultimate effects on the targeted territories, groups (population and institutions) and policy areas.

<b>Name of the project activity</b>  <i>(The given opportunity to list 10 activities is not mandatory! Please, plan reasonable and justifiable number of main types of project activities)</i>	<b>Description (max 3000 characters with spaces per activity):</b> <i>Please, make sure you briefly outline the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- what the activity is about and why it is needed;</li><li>- its cross-border relevance;</li><li>- who is benefiting and in what way;</li><li>- responsible partner for the implementation of the activity (make sure this information is compatible with the information provided in section B.1.6 'Partner motivation and contribution' of the application from in JeMS);</li></ul>
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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<i>- Location of the physical investment (please, specify where the investment will be located)</i>
1. Management, coordination and communication	<p>Management, coordination and communication activities cover the appointment of the project team and the Communications Expert. Four partner meetings will be organized. Current issues related to the organization and the identification of the next tasks will be discussed. A Final conference is planned, at which the achievements will be reported and measures for the continuation of activities after the end of the project will be outlined.</p> <p>A project team will be assigned to the Lead Partner, Municipality of Stambolovo - 1 manager, 1 coordinator and one accountant, 3 coordinators will be assigned by the partners Ahmetbey municipality, to Luleburgas district and to the RDU. There will also be 4 accountants (for each partner) who will keep track of all project costs. At the four partner meetings, the project activities will be coordinated and the next project initiatives will be identified. One communications expert will also be appointed, who will maintain the mobile applications, supply project information to all partners, maintain social networks: Facebook and YouTube. The project will end with a Final conference on the topic: "Tourism and economic cross-border development in the focus of the local community", which will be held in Stambolovo. It will include 40 people, 10 people from Ahmetbey, 10 people from Ljuleburgas and 20 people from Stambolovo. At the conference, the results of the project activities will be presented and the documents will be adopted, on the basis of which the cross-border network will be built and the joint initiatives will be marked after the end of the project. In this way, the sustainability of the achieved</p>

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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>results will be guaranteed. The Reconstruction and Development Union will be mainly responsible for the implementation of the Final conference, but each partner will be involved in the development of the documents and in providing the participants and the logistics for their movement.</p>
<p>2. Carrying out construction and repairing of infrastructure</p>	<p>1 One community center will be built in the municipality of Stambolovo and one renovated in Ahmetbey . They are necessary for the local community to organize large cultural festivals, to support farmers, who will be able to display their products for free as well as for the holding of personal holidays, such as weddings. Until now, both municipalities do not have a large space on which to hold various events. The two sites will be equipped with alternative energy sources to illuminate the sites. In the municipality of Ahmetbey, solar panels for renewable energy and batteries for energy storage will be installed, and in Stambolovo the lamps themselves will be powered by solar energy. These community centers will mainly benefit young people, who will organize and attend the festivals and celebrations, producers of agricultural products and handicrafts. Until now, the festivals are held outdoors in the stadium, which depends on the weather. The community centers built will enable these festivals to become permanent, serving the people of the region and the population of neighboring villages who receive services from various institutions in Ahmetbey and attend the Friday market. In Stambolovo, until now, due to lack of a suitable place, no weekly market is held, which affects negatively the local farmers. Each municipality will be responsible for the maintenance and operation of its community centre.</p>





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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>2. Building of a 500-meter pedestrian lane, which will be 2.50 m wide, and a 500-meter two-way bicycle lane with a width of 2.60 m in Ahmetney.</p> <p>3. Construction of two eco-trails in the municipality of Stambolovo: The construction of the eco-trails is necessary, because in the last years 7 hotels and guest houses were built, which increased the number of tourists on the territory of the municipality of Stambolovo, which, however, due to the lack of sufficient tourist attractions, are not staying long time in the area. These are the trails: "Wonderful Rocks" which is about 1.7 km long and the "Thracian Tomb - Pchelari village" eco-path, which is 1.5 km long. Both sites are important for tourists because they have been known for a long time, have great cultural value, but are difficult to access. The improved access will ensure their socialization, they will know each other well and will be visited by a larger number of tourists, which will keep them in the territory for a longer time.</p> <p>4. Repairing of the building of the Interactive Exhibition in the village of Dolno Cherkovishte, Stambolovo municipality. The interactive exhibition "Biodiversity in the Arda Valley" was built in 2012 by the Reconstruction and Development Union in partnership with the municipality of Stambolovo and was financed by OP "Environment". Around each construction site there will be 2 signs that will provide information about the project and about the cultural sites. A total of 10 signs will be placed near the construction sites.</p>
3. Digitization of tourist sites and tourist services in the cross-border territory	In order to ensure a good organization of the two community centers, the eco-trails and the cultural and tourist sites located on the territory of Lüleburgas, 3 mobile applications will be developed and actively

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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>used for the management and reporting of the number of visitors. They will be used when: visiting the two community centers, when using the eco-paths, when visiting the Interactive Exhibition and when visiting the tourist sites located on the territory of Lüleburgas</p> <p>Barcodes will also be produced and placed on signs presenting the project or providing information on local tourist and cultural sites, on farmers and companies that offer tourist services, local specialties, organic food and handmade items. There will be 15 of them in Lüleburgas and they will provide information translated into Bulgarian, Turkish and English. In the Municipality of Stambolovo, there will also be 15 signs and they will be in: Bulgarian, Turkish, English and Greek. This digitization will benefit both tourists and guests of the municipality, as well as agricultural producers and companies offering attractions, wine, organic foods and other services improving the conditions for rest and entertainment. They will be easily identified by tourists, who will be informed about the services offered and find their location in a quick and convenient way. In this innovative way, the cultural and natural attractions will be promoted, the production of local products will be encouraged, as well as the consumption of local food will increase, and local production will be encouraged. In practice, creating markets for local products will not only support local farmers, but also shorten the chain between producers and consumers, and this will also lead to a reduction in carbon emissions.</p>
4. Renovation of the Interactive Exhibition "Biodiversity in the Arda Valley"	<p>The interactive exhibition was built in 2012 by the Reconstruction and Development Union in partnership with the municipality of Stambolovo and financed by OP "Environment". It presents the biodiversity of the Eastern Rhodopes. Unfortunately,</p>

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>over time they have depreciated and the exhibition is currently in need of a complete makeover to retain the interest of visitors. It is necessary to update the information on the status of the endangered species, to prepare new interactive modules and life-size models of typical species and to present the information on the new protected area in the area. When visiting the exhibition, tourists and guests from Turkey will be able to learn about the natural features and biodiversity of the region in an entertaining and interesting way. For their part, Bulgarian visitors will be able to visit Turkish museums and exhibition halls. In this way, the exchange of visits and visits will help to get to know each other and to maintain sustainable contacts between the communities on both sides of the border. The municipality of Stambolovo will be responsible for the renovation of the exhibition, but the visits will be supported by all project partners. The necessary setting scope, binoculars and other equipment important for nature observation will be purchased for the tourists. A laptop, a screen and a multifunctional device will also be purchased, through which it will be possible to demonstrate films presenting cross-border features.</p>
<p>5. Carrying out 2 photography plein airs with 10 established photographers each and organizing 4 exhibitions about the nature of the cross-border territory</p>	<p>This will be a pilot project activity that will provide sufficient photographic material for the entire transboundary area. The first plein air will be held on the territory of Stambolovo municipality. It will include five photographers from the Turkey and five from the Bulgaria. The second will be held on the territory of Lüleburgaz. Both plein airs will last for 5 days. Every day, the photographers will be able to visit different cultural and natural sites in the surrounding area and will photograph them. At the end of the plein air, each of them must provide the organizers with a minimum of 50</p>

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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>selected photos for the Bulgarian and 50 photos for the Turkish territory, i.e. a minimum of 100 quality photos will be collected for the cross-border territory. These photos will be used not only in the exhibitions organized under the project, but also in the advertising materials presenting the tourist sites in the cross-border area. Each participant will be able to choose from their 50 photos, 10 that are distinguished by the highest quality and attractiveness. This will provide a set of 100 best quality photos. From them, each member of the photography group will have the right to vote, choosing 4 foreign photos, which, in his opinion, are the most successful. The selected 40 best photos (20 for the Bulgarian territory and 20 for the Turkish territory) will be prepared by their authors by attaching them to a passepartout. In this way, the photos will be collected, which will form the mobile photo exhibition. It will be held in four places: in Stambolovo, in Haskovo, in Lyuleburgas and in Ahmetbey. For this purpose, it is planned to publish 2 announcements for each exhibition. The photo exhibition will show the attractiveness of the cross-border area and will answer the question why these interesting places from the cross-border territory should be visited. This activity will benefit potential tourists, and especially young people who do not know the attractive destinations so well. Local residents will be convinced, not only that there is much to see in the territory, but also how we can better get to know the cultural, historical and natural wealth of the cross-border territory. The rich photographic material will also be used for the advertising materials, which will expand the reach of the informed population in the cross-border area. Each partner will be responsible for conducting the photography plein air and</p>
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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>the exhibitions but good coordination will be required to achieve the expected project results, namely the collection of rich photographic material, informed citizens, potential tourists and a ready photo exhibition that after the end it will be stored by the Municipality of Stambolovo.</p>
6. Conducting information and advertising activities	<p>This activity will include the following sub-activities:</p> <p>6.1 Development of cross-border tourist routes – in order to ensure the cross-border effect, common cross-border routes will be developed, which will be served by the partners and the attracted additional interested parties, who will be involved in the logistics of the cross-border network. These will be people from neighboring municipalities. In this way, it will be possible to involve more interested parties and increase the effect of the exploitation of tourist routes on a rather large cross-border territory, covering almost the entire cross-border area. The tourist itineraries will be promoted in the brochure, on social media, on partners' websites and on regional media so their competent preparation is particularly important. The developed tourist routes will connect the two cross-border territories. They will be part of a cross-border tourist network that will cover the regions of Haskovo, Edirne and Kirkclareli, which will ensure a fairly good number of tourists.</p> <p>6.2 Development and printing of the following information materials on the project: a brochure with the tourist routes in 3 languages: Bulgarian, Turkish and English, a brochure for the project also in 3 languages; The brochure will present the cross-border tourist routes.</p> <p>6.3. Carrying out an advertising campaign to improve awareness among stakeholders on both sides of the border covering the key sites included in the cross-border routes.</p>

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
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СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>This activity will take place: during site visits for workshops and distribution of promotional materials, on the websites of the four partners, on social media, on regional media and on informational sites. Every result of the already implemented project activity will be published on the websites of the partners, who will provide the current information to the Communication Expert, who will not only have to publish it on the website of the municipality of Stambolovo and on social media, but also provide it and the other partners to publish it on their own sites. Making 5 publications in Bulgaria and 5 in Turkey presenting the interesting cultural and natural sites in the cross-border area and the scope of the developed tourist routes. Many people will benefit from this project activity, because the information will reach a large group of citizens living in the cross-border territory. The use of advertising materials, websites, social media, regional media and information sites ensure that the information will reach at least 50,000 of the population living in the Haskovo region and in the Luleburgas region. Throughout the implementation of this activity, the cross-border connection between all partners will take place. RDU will be responsible for this activity.</p>
7. Conducting training and information initiatives:	<p>The project envisages two training seminars and one training trip. These are necessary to build local capacity to absorb the expected increase of tourists. Under the project, 2 one-day seminars will be held with 20 stakeholders each on the issues of innovation in tourism integrated services. One seminar will be held in Stambolovo, and the other in Ljuleburgas. Two training trips will be organized with 10 people each (10 from the Bulgaria and 10 from the Turkey), which will visit the developed cross-border routes in Bulgaria and in Turkey. The tours</p>

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ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>will be carried out jointly. This will improve the mutual familiarization between the interested parties and get to know more thoroughly the tourist sites that will be visited by tourists and guests of the cross-border region. This activity will benefit the representatives of the partners, as well as the owners of hotels, restaurants, museums, exhibitions and local attractions, who will be included in the cross-border partner network and will be able to support the future logistics of the tourist routes. In this way, tourists and guests of the cross-border region will benefit to the greatest extent from the improved tourist services. The responsibility for the implementation of these activities will be of those in charge of these activities, namely the Reconstruction and Development Union and the Lüleburgas district.</p>
8. Youth activities	<p>The future belongs to young people and therefore their inclusion in project activities is particularly important for the sustainability and the maintenance of cultural and economic contacts between the two communities after the end of the project. Various activities are planned for young people, dividing them into two main groups: school students and youth over 18 years old.</p> <p>8.1. For the group of students, the construction of youth clubs in Stambolovo and Ahmed Bey with the name "We protect nature, nature protects us!" is planned. Each Club will consist of at least 10 children. Young people will be taught in 8 events how to protect the environment and biodiversity, how to collect garbage separately and what steps to take to reduce climate change. To establish direct cross-border contact, the first and last session will be held jointly online. In this way, a small group of 20 nature lovers will be trained to protect</p>



	<p>nature, the need to reduce harmful emissions and to protect biodiversity.</p> <p>8.2. Drawing competitions will be announced on both sides of the border in Ahmetbey and in Stambolovo under the title "Living organisms and the impact of climate change on them". In addition to club members, other young people from the region can participate as well. The drawings will be exhibited in public places with wide access by visitors in both municipalities. After a week's stay, the drawings will be exchanged and presented on the other side of the border. They will be published on the websites and in social networks as well. The best 5 children will be guests during the exchange in the municipality of Ahmetbey, where they will make a joint exhibition in a suitable public place. After that, they will welcome the five best performing participants in the exhibition on the territory of Stambolovo municipality.</p> <p>8.3. Holding large cultural and sports events with the participation of young people. The construction of the two community centers will provide conditions for regular holding of large community initiatives. For example, Ahmetbey municipality holds various outdoor concerts, the last youth concert was attended by 7,000 people. The community centers will serve as a place where the local community and especially young people will be able to organize various events and have fun together. Under this activity, it is planned to hold several large cultural and sports events and to facilitate informal communication between young people. The following are planned for this activity: 1. carrying out 4 festivals in the Ahmetbey, Sakizköy, Evrensekiz and Stambolovo. 2. Organising 3 working meetings in the municipalities: Ahmetbey, Sakizköy and Evrensekiz. 3. Organising a big concert in Stambolovo municipality. 4.</p>
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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	Organising 4 football matches in: Ahmetbey, Sakizköy, Evrensekiz and Stambolovo.
9. Creation of a cross-border tourist network	<p>The creation of the cross-border tourism network is an important condition for ensuring the sustainability of the project activities. It will involve interested parties not only from the municipalities of Stambolovo, Ahmetbey and the Lyuleburgas region, but will also attract people and institutions from the territories adjacent to the target areas. This activity is necessary in order to ensure the use and maintenance of the developed tourist routes after the end of the project. The network, once established, will be able to provide ongoing communication between its members. In order for it to become a fact, it is necessary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To identify the interested parties, to hold focus groups, conversations and meetings with the targeted persons, so that they can motivate themselves to join the network;</li><li>2. To draw up regulations to structure and regulate the activities of the network;</li><li>3. To develop a program that will indicate the planned activities with deadlines and responsible persons. Finally, these documents will be approved and signed during the Closing Conference, which will provide an opportunity to monitor the implemented project activities and provide documents that will secure the transition for the development of partnerships after the end of the project. In this way, a common cross-border system will be created with its own governing bodies, with its own program and goals. The interested parties will be identified by holding four focus groups, to which interested parties in the field of tourism will be invited, not only from the target territory, but also from its neighboring municipalities. The inclusion of key sites in the routes will require additional individual meetings and conversations with</li></ol>

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	interested parties from more distant settlements. One focus group will be held in Stambolovo, and the other in Haskovo. In Turkey, focus groups will be implemented in Ahmetbey and Lüleburgaz. In the implementation of this activity, cross-border connections will be made, which will be important for the effective implementation of the logistics of the tourist routes and the cultural-economic interaction between the local communities on both sides of the border. Tourists and young people will mainly benefit from this activity Reconstruction and Development Union will be responsible for thus activity , but all other partners will also participate in all stages.
10. Click or tap here to enter text.	Click to enter description

#### C.2.2.2. To which indicators your project idea will contribute?

Please, select, from the drop-down menu, pairs of indicators to which your project idea contribute and briefly explain how is that going to be ensured. Make sure you have consulted the **Annex 4 Indicators fiches** provided in the Application package of the present Call.

Indicator Pairs	Specification:
<b>RCO84 - RCO116 - RCR104</b>	The project partners will embrace, develop and test new approaches, products to boost the tourism attractiveness of the cross-border region by stepping on its territorial potentials. Namely photographic plener will be organized as pilot actions in order to unleash the potential of the region as destination for photo tourism. Similarly pilot digitalization of the touristic routes will be done and app will be developed. Those actions will be developed jointly contributing to RCO84 and RCO116
<b>RCO58 - RCR64</b>	Dedicated cycling infrastructure (500 metres) will be built in Ahmetbay municipality
<b>RCO77 - RCR77</b>	The value of this indicator is 4 since two eco-trails in Stambolovo municipality will be

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	constructed and one cultural and community sites will be built in Stambolovo and one such center will be renovated and equipped Ahmetbey municipality
<b>RCO74</b>	The project will cover 6 000 inhabitants in Stambolovo and 100 000 in Luleburgaz

### C.2.3. Why is cross-border cooperation needed to achieve the project's objectives and result?

Please explain why the project objectives cannot be efficiently reached acting only on a national/regional /local level and/or describe what benefits the project partners/target groups/project area/programme area gain in taking a cross-border approach.

The objectives of the project cannot be achieved effectively if acting only at the national, regional or local level, because the tourism and especially nature tourism requires cross-border approach. It depends on environment that covers the entire transboundary region. Conversely, its improvement will improve the environment on both sides of the border.

Interventions planned, coordinated and implemented centrally by the government are no longer sufficient to address the complex challenges of the borderlands.

The overall objective is to contribute to sustainable economic growth in the Municipality of Stambolovo and Luleburgaz district through supporting tourism and local initiatives thus increasing competitiveness of the local economy, digital and green transformation. The project outputs are as the following:

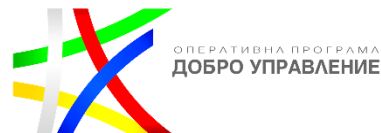
- The area is more accessible and attractive for tourist through improving infrastructure to attractive sites - building eco-trails to Thracian tomb and protected site with remarkable rock complex, constricting cycling lane
- Improved visitors experience by repairing exposition building, renovation interactive exposition dedicated to biodiversity, digitalization of tourist information, promotion and education
- Improved social infrastructure improving the quality of life of rural population – building community centres that harbours local events
- Increased awareness in nature conservation among young people by creating eco-clubs and organizing educational events
- Improved cross border connectiveness and collaborative approach to developing green tourism

In every project activity there is a cross-border connection and common benefit for the beneficiaries on both sides of the border. The project develops activities that are important to rural areas, where

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



prosperity depends on the capacity to mobilize people and local resources, while at the same time developing locational factors that make living and economic conditions more attractive to people and rural economy. The planned and implemented measures in the project will increase not only their effectiveness, but also the effectiveness of the package of measures as a whole.

The horizontal policies of cross-border cooperation are also implemented, according to which each supported intervention includes appropriate actions that contribute to the protection of the environment and biodiversity and provide green and digital solutions. Here, the integrated approach is used to support multi-sectoral interventions, enabling different communities and stakeholders to apply their local skills and strengths and to have a sense of ownership of the decisions that are made jointly.

Bringing partners together will increase their resources and expertise. The partnerships that are built will multiply the project results, create conditions for the emergence of additional partnerships and new opportunities for the local economy and, above all, for agriculture and forestry. The exchange of experience, knowledge, know-how and the use of innovative solutions will increase the added value of the results achieved by the target groups in the application of the cross-border approach.

The cross-border region covered by the project is a functionally connected territory where cross-border cooperation is important and which contributes to the balanced territorial development of the region by responding to local needs and realizing local potential.

#### *C.2.4. Who will benefit from your project outputs?*

In the first column of each row, please select one of the pre-defined target groups from the drop-down list. In the second column explain in more detail exactly who and how will benefit from your project, as well as the link between project needs, expected results and target groups.

<b><u>Target groups</u></b>	<b><u>Specification:</u></b>
<b>Local public authority</b>	Munisipalities of Stambolovo and Ahmetbay will benefit from improved infrastructure and especially community centers that will accommodate weddings and various community events so that they can better implement their obligation to serve to the local population. They will increase their capacity for developing tours and use of digital products. Their capacity to work in international environment will increase as well.
<b>Regional public authority</b>	Luleburgaz district will benefit from the increased tourist potential and capacity to increase the incomes in local economy. The administration will become more experienced not only in dealing with local needs but also in working on cross border and international level

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

#### Interest groups including NGOs

Local villagers that will use community centers for their events – about 10 000, owners of hotels, guest houses and restaurants and their families and staff that will have increased number of tourists – 400, people that like nature and outdoor sports that will use visitor center, Eco trails and cycling lanes – about 8000, students and young people that will be involved in educational activities - 2000, users of the applications and digital products including information on webpages - 50 000

Click to select

Click to enter text (max 500 characters)

Click to select

Click to enter text (max 500 characters)

Click to select

Click to enter text (max 500 characters)

#### C.2.5. How does the project contribute to regional/national/local strategies and policies?

Please indicate to which strategies and policies your project will contribute. Then describe in what way you will contribute.

Regional/national/local strategies	Contribution <i>(max 500 characters with spaces per strategy)</i>
National Development Programme BULGARIA 2030	Targeted policies and interventions are grouped into five integrated axes of development, to the achievement of which the project contributes: Innovative and intelligent Bulgaria; Green and sustainable Bulgaria; Connected and integrated Bulgaria; Responsive and fair Bulgaria and Spiritual and vibrant Bulgaria
ELEVENTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019-2023 of Turkey	The main objective is to protect the environment and natural resources, improve quality, ensure effective, integrated and sustainable management, implement environment- and climate-friendly practices in all areas, and increase environmental awareness and sensitivity of all segments of the society.
Integrated territorial strategy for the development of the South Central region of Bulgaria	In the Integrated Strategy for the Territorial Development of the South Central Region, the following priorities for the development

Проект № BG05SFOP001-2.025-0026 „Партньорството на гражданите с местните власти, предпоставка за прилагането на принципите на прозрачност, откритост и ефективност на публичните политики за устойчиво развитие на територията”, финансиран от Оперативна програма „Добро управление”



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

	<p>of the region during the period 2021-2027 are defined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1: Strengthening the competitive positions of the South Central African Republic region through investments in growth factors.</li><li>2: Improvement of the social and ecological environment of the SRC.</li><li>3: More balanced territorial development and reduction of inequalities in the South African Republic.</li></ol>
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#### *C.2.6. How does the project build on available knowledge?*

Please describe the experiences/lessons learned that the project draws on, and other available knowledge the project capitalizes on.

The project relies mainly on available resources, project experience and expertise in the field of natural and cultural tourism, as well as in project management. Each partner has different resources, experiences and knowledge that can be exchanged. In this way, knowledge and practices are complemented, expanded and deepened. The implementation of the approach Community-led local development, new policies, strategic documents at the European, national and regional level and the established and developed partnership relationships are a serious basis for deepening the processes and for capitalizing the added value of the project results.

The project built on and capitalise in previous projects and initiatives. It will repair and develop exhibition building and interactive exhibition dedicated to biodiversity established in 2012 near the village of Dolno Cherkovishte in the frame of a project funded by operational program environment. The eco-trails will be built in protected site Dolno Cherkovushte proposed by Stambolovo municipality and Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB) in 2011 and declared by the Ministry of Environment and Water in 2023. Eco-trails were planed using the knowledge of BSPB in order to avoid disturbance of breeding sites of rare birds. BSPB collect information on endangered birds through funding from EU LIFE program. Reconstruction and Development Union will capitalise on the Experience in tourism development gathered by in the frame of cross-border projects in Stambolovo and Topolovgrad municipalities.

The project idea is aimed at investments in tourist and community needed infrastructure, protection of the environment and biodiversity, trainings, environmental education, dissemination of information and advertising materials among interested parties. All this will create supportive conditions for the development of ecotourism in the territory. In addition, public attitudes will change and prerequisites will be created for active support of the green economy and reduction of climate change.

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

The partnership between the two Turkish partners has existed for more than 10 years. The partnership between the Bulgarian partners is of the same duration. Many years of experience show good results from the implemented joint activities and initiatives. By expanding these partnerships on both sides of the border, it is assumed that the added value will be increased and the results will be multiplied.

The project will promote the sustainable and integrated development of territories, rural areas and local initiatives, by getting closer to the people and tying the various public-private structures into partnership. The results of the project will lead to inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, natural heritage, sustainable tourism in rural areas. The "wise use of scarce resources" will be promoted through multi-sectoral interventions and multi-level governance will be implemented.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



### C.3 Project partnership

Describe the structure of your partnership and explain why these partners are needed to implement the project and to achieve project objectives. Justify the balanced structure of the partnership in terms of addressed target groups, sectors, territory. Explain how project partners' competences correspond with the assigned responsibilities.

Strengthening cooperation between authorities and civil society on the priority topics of cross-border cooperation is essential for maintaining and building additional capacity of partners. Based on this understanding, we have established partnership relations between: Municipality of Stambolovo, Ahmetbey Municipality, Luleburgaz district, Reconstruction and Development Union.

These partnership relationships ensure close cooperation in the study of the problems of the cross-border territory, in the preparation of the project proposal, in the joint decision-making, in the distribution of responsibilities and in the use of new approaches. In addition, the project envisages the construction of a partner cross-border network for sustainable development, which will continue cooperation after the end of the project based on the developed joint strategy and action plan.

Stambolovo municipality will be responsible for the following activities:

- Project management and coordination
- Construction of community center and two eco-trails,
- Repairing of the building of the interactive exhibition dedicated to the biodiversity of Arda river valley
- Renovation of the interactive exhibition dedicated to the biodiversity of Arda river valey
- Digitization of tourist sites and tourist services in the cross-border territory including development and maintenance of 2 mobile applications and barcodes
- Drawing competition entitled «Living organisms and the impact of climate change on them
- Holding large cultural and sports events with the participation of young people

Reconstruction and Development Union will be responsible to perform the following activities:

- Conducting two photographic plein airs and organizing 4 exhibitions on the cross-border territory
- Development of cross-border tourist routes;
- Development and printing of information materials
- Conducting an advertising campaign
- Conducting 1 one-day seminar with 20 people interested parties on the issues of innovation in tourist services.

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

- Organization of 2 three-day training trips with 10 people each
- Establishment of a youth club named "We protect nature, nature protects us
- Creation of a cross-border tourist network

Luleburgaz district will be responsible to perform the following activities:

- Conducting two photographic plein airs with 10 people
- Conducting an advertising campaign to improve awareness among stakeholders
- Conducting 1 one-day seminar with 20 people interested parties on the issues of innovation in tourist services.
- Organization of 2 three-day training trips with 10 people each
- Establishment of a youth club named "We protect nature, nature protects us!"
- Holding a one-week children's drawing exhibition in Lüleburgaz
- Holding an open-air festival of folk art
- Digitization of tourist sites and tourist services in the cross-border territory including development and maintenance of 1 mobile application and barcodes for tourist sites -
- Creation of a cross-border tourist network

Municipality of Ahmetbey will be responsible to perform the following activities:

- Renovation and equipment of a Community Center
- Construction of 500 meters of pedestrian lane and 500 meters of two-way bike lane
- Installation of renewable energy solar panels and batteries
- Youth activities - drawing competition entitled «Living organisms and the impact of climate change on them
- Holding large cultural and sports events with the participation of young people

The joint project will improve production and environmental infrastructure, business climate, promote the implementation of tourism innovation and expand cooperation between stakeholders on both sides of the border. Making joint efforts to improve infrastructure, attract tourists, protect ecosystems, fight against pollution and waste of water resources, improve air quality are the result of planned project activities and established partnership relationships.

The sustainability of decisions made regarding cross-border cooperation is directly related to multi-level governance as a principle and driver of innovation and good practices. This requires regular stakeholder forums on important topics of green economy, digitalization and environmental protection, which we have planned. The different capacity of the individual partners, the different expertise, experience, knowledge and practices that each one of them possesses will be a good basis for their exchange and their promotion among the wider local community.

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

The partners will cooperate not only in the implementation of the project, but also in a broader perspective, moving between sectors and beyond administrative boundaries and establishing mutually supportive cross-border networks and interdependencies to eliminate socio-economic differences and achieve the maximum in uniting territorial resources based on commonalities and partnerships.

1. Lead partner

Signature: .....

(Legal representative)

Date: .....

2. Project Partner 1

Signature: .....

(Legal representative)

Date: .....

3. Project Partner 2

Signature: .....

(Legal representative)

Date: .....

4. Project Partner 3

Signature : .....

(Legal representative)

*Add as many signature fields as the number of project partners is*



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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ  
СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

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Project ID  
(automatically generated by JeMS)  
Project name  
Project acronym

BGTR0200032
Touraccess
Touraccess

Indicative project budget (budget forecast) - overview per partner / per cost category (EUR), VAT included

Partner No and name <small>(if the concept note has more than 10 project partners, contact the Operational Unit and they will provide you with a budget template adjusted to the exact number of partners)</small>	Country	Budget cost categories		BC1		BC2		BC3		BC4		BC5	BC6	BC7	TOTAL BUDGET	
		Staff costs (staff costs for project management – up to 10% of the eligible costs under BC 4, BC 5 and BC 6 of the entire project budget of the respective project partner or staff costs including project implementation – up to 20% )		% of the eligible costs under BC 4, BC 5 and BC 6 of the entire project budget of the respective project partner		Office and administration (up to 15 % of staff costs)		Travel and accommodation (up to 5 % of the staff costs)		% of the staff costs		External expertise and services		Investment component should be no less than 60% of the total budget		
												Equipment	Infrastructure and works	(full project preparation cost, eligible at the submission of full project proposals - up to 12 000 per application)		
												(accumulated value of infrastructure and works and equipment should be at least 60%)				
LP	Bulgaria	40848.00	10.00%	6127.20	15.00%	320.00	0.78%	66830.00	16400.00	325250.00				455775.2		
PP1	Bulgaria	5260.00	10.00%	789.00	15.00%	120.00	2.28%	52600.00	0.00	0.00				58769		
PP2	Turkiye	9601.00	10.00%	1440.15	15.00%	320.00	3.33%	92510.00	0.00	3500.00				107371.15		
PP3	Turkiye	33243.00	10.00%	4986.45	15.00%	320.00	0.96%	12430.00	50000.00	270000.00				370979.45		
PP4			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP5			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP6			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP7			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP8			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP9			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
PP10			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%							0		
Total		88952		13342.8		1080		224370	66470	506750				992894.8		
% of Total budget			8.96%		1.34%		0.11%		22.60%	6.69%	66.92%	0.00%	0.00%	100%		

1. Lead partner

